

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MAY 88

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULL NAME: Jarmila Sobota

PRESENT POSITION Co-director of
Saturdays' Book Art Gallery

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 1946 ,Czechoslovakia

CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA: Crafts

ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.): Charles IV. University in Prague, Czechoslovakia, Master Degree in Psychology. For ten years - studying design binding with Jan Sobota, internationally recognized in the field of book arts and design bookbinding (recently has exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

- 1988 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF DECORATIVE PAPERS, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
DIVERSITY: WORKS IN HAND MADE PAPER, Fiory Gallery, Cleveland
- 1987 WESTERN RESERVE HAND BOOKBINDERS, Freiburger Library, Case Western University, Cleveland
DECORATIVE PAPERS, Saturdays' Book Art Gellery, Euclid
INFINITE DIVERSITY IN INFINITE COMBINATION, The Massilion Museum, Massilion, etc.

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

Sandusky Cultural Center, Sandusky
Saturdays' Book Arts Gallery, Euclid
Bookcollectors: Paul Csank, Pepper Pike
Susan Swartzburg, New Bruncwik, NJ
Thomas Slavin, Cleveland
Jan Vasatko, Allschvill, Switzerland
Hansheinrich Meier, Stafa, Switzerland etc.

AWARDS:

Special Award, 1. prize - Renaissance Fayre Art Mart, 1987
Special Mention, Cain Park Arts Festival X., 1987

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

Jarmila Sobota - Statement

The art form known as "marbling" is one of the most original and creative painting techniques that has been in existence since the 12th century. "Marbling" earned its interesting name because the cloud-like patterns that formed in the solution used, actually resembled the shapes in marble stone. By distributing patterned colors that floated on liquid, the artist is able to lift the print off of the liquid and on to paper, or in some cases, on to silk. Due to the cloud-like appearance of these shapes, the craft has been referred to as "cloud painting," or "color floating" by artists in the past.

One cannot say specifically where marbling began, but one of the earliest forms known as "Suminagashi" was practiced in Japan during the 12th century. Later in the 15th century, a process called "ebru" involving combing of designs, was used by Persians and Turks. Marbling eventually spread through out Europe, allowing the creativity of artists from all over the world to define their particular styles, such as "nonpareil," and "Stormont." Unfortunately, instruction on how to marble paper was not available to people until the nineteenth century, so many holders of the secrets to the process guarded it fervently, and absolutely refused to share it with anyone else.

As a bookbinder, I enjoy creating marbled paper for book designs, or for restoration covers of old books. New designs that I make give me the opportunity to create something original for a specific book, bonding illustration, type and book style to my design. Marbled paper is very ambiguous, so there is space left for the imagination of the reader. I also enjoy replacing original designs of old books when I'm trying to restore the cover. It is a great challenge to try to create a replica of the faded print.

When I first began marbling, I liked the free designs and enjoyed the mystery of how each design might end up. Now, after many years of experience. I find greater satisfaction in perfecting the ambiguous shapes, detailing them and adding sharp, striking edges. I always have a specific pattern in mind before I start, so I find it necessary to polish the shapes to my specification. There are so many ways to manipulate the pattern, that I find myself constantly giving finishing touches to my designs. Often I find myself repeating a design over and over again until I reach the exact pattern I have in mind.

My favorite use of marbled paper is for book binding. Paper in this are allows for greater freedom than the more conventional leather. The designs are much more interesting and mysterious, and the paper itself is much more stronger than people imagine. It is also more ideal to absorb print as well. I also create various paper works, boxes and elegant silk scarves. Because no two patterns are ever exactly identical, every design is original. I believe it is important to stress our own identity through such a medium, and marbling paper has been such an outlet for me.